

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard.

To me, Sinclair's decision to use its unique position to influence the presidential election in an offensive and corrupt attempt to return the quid for the quo appears to be a blatant reward for an administration that exalts Sinclair's interests above the public's. I believe that airing "Stolen Honor" before the election, especially without airing counterbalancing programs of the same ilk from the other perspective (e.g., "Fahrenheit 9-11") will have been the gravest breach yet of the trust given to media companies who use the airwaves. If my local Sinclair outlet (channel 13 in Sacramento, CA) airs that program as is apparently planned by all Sinclair stations, then I will remove that Sinclair station from my TV's remote programming and boycott it for as long as Sinclair owns it. That's not an idle threat: I'm an ex diehard major league baseball fan who has boycotted all forms of MLB (broadcast and park attendance) since the last player's strike. I know I can live without Sinclair programming.

Thank you for at least reading this plea to do the right thing.

Sincerely,  
Rich Holt